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NOTES ON EAST GERMAN SEAPORTS

As part of the expansion of the East German port of Rostock, two new cranes and a loading bridge have been built, which will increase the transshipping capacity of the harbor by 4,500 tons daily by the beginning of 1952. The 1951 transshipping in Rostock is estimated at 1.2-1.4 million tons.

According to reports, the port of Wismar is being greatly expanded. The industrial harbor, the west harbor, and particularly the overseas harbor are being expanded. It is assumed that, from now on, Wismar will be the East German transshipping port for overseas goods. The largest dredgers of the GDR are now in Wismar for port expansion work.

Export and import goods, according to a special regulation, can be insured only with the Soviet General Black Sea and Baltic Sea, Inc. The insurance premiums have to be paid in foreign currency. A branch office of this firm is located in East Berlin.

According to a report from the Federation of People-Owned Shipyards, there is still a shortage of technicians qualified to train new shipyard workers in East Germany. In the Warnow shipyard in Warnemuende, only a very few trained instructors are available for the 450 new apprentices (250 of them are girls) who entered the shipyard at the end of September. The same is true of the Rostock and Stralsund shipyards.(1)

The GDR is considering unifying all individual enterprises such as transshipping, stowing, commissioning, piloting, storage, etc., under over-all People-Owned Seaport Managements. This would abolish all influence by privately owned enterprises. In the expansion of the combined Rostock-Warnemuende harbors, the Rostock-Warnemuende railroad line will be double tracked. This will improve freight traffic between the two harbors. In addition, a new harbor railroad station has been built in Rostock-Bramow.

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After three trips to Ventspils and Klaypeda, the East German merchant ship Vorwarts has begun a trip to the Polish harbor of Gdynia. On board are approximately 1,200 tons of East German export goods destined for China. As reported, regular connections will be established between East German and Polish ports. Certain indications point to Szczecin and Gdansk/Gdynia as the harbors through which will be routed most of the East German export goods destined for the Far East.

At present, about 200 seamen are being trained as captains, navigator, radio operators, and machinists for merchant and fishing vessels, at the seamen's school in Wustrow auf Fischland. The only school of this kind in East Germany, it will soon be greatly expanded.

The Wismar State Shipyard is now called Mathias-Thesen Shipyard. To date, this shipyard has undertaken the repair of many Soviet ships. At present, the large Soviet motor ship Pobeda is being overhauled there. Next year, the shipyard will also participate in the shipbuilding program of the GDR. In October, an "activist school" patterned after the Soviet model was established at the Wismar shipyard. This school is to contribute to higher productivity, plan realization, and better operation of the shipyard. Special competitions will be held among GDR shipyards.

A German Office for Sea Freight has been established in East Germany. This brings to an end any handling of sea freight by privately owned enterprises. The German Office for Sea Freight will immediately take over exclusive control of all incoming and outgoing ship traffic. The office, which is under the GDR Ministry of Foreign Trade, is responsible for the smooth functioning of all overseas traffic. A special task of this office will be to keep an eye on trade with China, in which capacity it will work closely with the corresponding Polish office. According to the GDR, there is sufficient trade between East Germany and the other Satellites to warrant a shipping line.

The chartering of boats in harbors outside the GDR is also under the indirect control of the German Office for Sea Freight. It seems that this new institution has already established close contact with the governmental shipping organizations of the other Satellites. The office will also control such chartering for the East German merchant marine, and will play an important part in chartering space on foreign vessels.(2)

SOURCES

1. Hamburg, Hansa, 20 Oct 51
2. Ibid., 10 Nov 51

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